

U.S. Serial No. 10/686,152
Attorney Dkt. No. ZM729/04001

REMARKS

Claim Objections

The Examiner pointed out grammatical errors in Claim 8. In response the Applicant has amended Claim 8 to correct these errors.

Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings for failing to show the subject matter of Claims 6 and 8. In response the Applicant has withdrawn Claim 6 and has amended Figs. 4 and 5 in the drawings to show the secondary flange of Claim 8.

Claim 8, as amended to correct grammatical errors, reads as follows:

“8. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein the pocket face comprises:

a pocket member defining the pocket on one side thereof and an opposite gasket face adjacent to a face of a secondary flange member attached to the end of the second conduit, and wherein the pocket member defines a passageway through a central portion thereof, and includes a pocket floor between the walls of the pocket and the passageway through the pocket member; and

a secondary gasket between the gasket face of the pocket member and the face of the secondary flange member;

wherein the pocket floor has an area that is greater than an area of the first face of the pocket member between the secondary gasket and the passageway through the pocket member.”

In Claim 1 the apparatus for connecting first and second conduits to carry a fluid under pressure includes as an element thereof “a pocket face attached around an open end of the second conduit and defining a pocket”.

Figs. 4 and 5 as amended illustrate an alternate embodiment of the apparatus of Claim 1 as claimed in Claim 8. In Claim 8 the pocket face comprises:

U.S. Serial No. 10/686,152
Attorney Dkt. No. ZM729/04001

a pocket member 102, which defines the pocket 107 where the gasket member 110 slides, instead of the pocket being defined in a flange attached directly to the second conduit;

a secondary flange member 124 attached to the end of the second conduit;

a secondary gasket 114 between the gasket face of the pocket member 102 and the face of the secondary flange member 124.

The operation of the embodiment of Claim 8 is described in the amended disclosure at page 9, line 20 to page 10, line 9:

Figs. 4 and 5 illustrate an alternate embodiment of the invention for use with a pair of conventional flat faced flanges 124 as shown in Figs. 1, 4, and 5. The apparatus 100 provides a substitute for a conventional gasket. A pocket member 102 forms a pocket 107 that corresponds to the pocket 7 of the prior embodiment. A gasket member 110 slides in the pocket 107 and is sealed to the walls 107W of the pocket 107 by an outer o-ring 112. Inner o-rings 14 on the gasket member 110 and pocket member 102 provide the seal between the flat flanges. A bias element, illustrated as spring 120, exerts an initial force between the gasket member 110 and pocket member 102 so as to force them apart and exert equal and opposite forces F, F' on the flat flanges.

As above, when the pressure HP inside the connection rises above the atmospheric pressure AP, the force between the pressure face 115 of the gasket member 110 and the pocket member 102 is greater than the opposite forces on the ring face 113 and the bottom area A4 of the pocket member 102, and a sealing force in directions F, F' is exerted to seal the inner o-rings 114 against the flat flanges. The pocket floor 119 between the walls 107W of the pocket 107 and the passageway through the pocket member 102 has an area that is greater than the area A4, and so the fluid pressure seals both the main and secondary gaskets illustrated as inner o-rings 114 against the corresponding flanges.

U.S. Serial No. 10/686,152
Attorney Dkt. No. ZM729/04001

The Applicant respectfully submits that the amended Figs. 4 and 5 now show every feature of the invention specified in Claim 8.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 - 3, 5 - 8, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by French Patent 2,563,316.

In response the Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 10 to specifically claim that "an area of the gasket face between the main gasket and the passageway through the gasket member is exposed to fluid carried by the conduits".

Using the Examiner's correspondence between the elements of the '316 patent and the elements of Claims 1 and 10, the area of the face of the gasket member 5b (portion of 5b touching 5a) that is between the main gasket (15 in the '316 patent), and the passageway through the gasket member (where 5b meets 3) is not exposed to fluid carried by the conduits, since gaskets (see translation below) 17 and 18 prevent fluid carried in the conduit 3 of the '316 patent from reaching the main gasket 15.

The parts 17 and 18 are each identified in the '316 patent at page 5, lines 27 - 29 in the French language as a "joint".

On the translation web-site <http://www.freedict.com/onldict/onldict.php>, the French word "joint" is translated as "gasket, joined".

On the translation web-site http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/ARTFL/forms_unrest/FR-ENG.html, the French word "joint" is translated as "gasket [noun, masculine]; joined [verb]; joint [adjective, adverb]".

Thus the '316 patent does not disclose all the limitations of the Applicant's amended Claims 1 and 10.

With respect to the dependent Claims 2 - 5, and 7 - 9 the Applicant relies on the above.

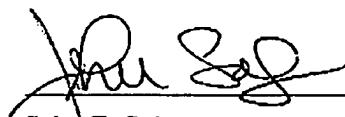
Applicant has made an earnest effort to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections and believes that Claims 1 - 5, and 7 - 10 are now in condition for allowance. The applicant solicits the allowance of Claims 1 - 5, and 7 - 10.

U.S. Serial No. 10/686,152
Attorney Dkt. No. ZM729/04001

If, however, the Examiner should for any reason consider this application not to be in condition for allowance he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Respectfully submitted,

8/16/04
Date


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